



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 02/13/2007**

*Approved April 10, 2007*

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:** Sue Sheffler, Chair  
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair  
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary  
Sean Garballey  
Jeff Thielman  
Martin Thrope  
Kathy Fennelly

**Superintendent:** Nate Levenson  
**Asst. Supt.:** Kevin Hutchinson  
**Chief Financial Off** Sue Mazzarella  
**Sp. Ed. Director:** Barbara Cataldo  
**Student Reps:** Sean Conroy and Ella Hartenian

**Call to order: 7:35 pm**

*Paul Schlichtman arrived 8:40 p.m.*

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**  
**None**

**CONSENT AGENDA** – all items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.  
*\*Approval of Warrant 07104 in the amount of \$445,367.67*

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to approve consent agenda  
Vote 6 – 0, Mr. Schlichtman absent

### **PROGRAM OF STUDIES**

Ms. Kaditz was proposing to the committee that AHS revise its GPA, and that an A continue to carry the numeric value of a 4.0 and that the A+ carry a value of 4.3. Ms. Kaditz also suggested we replace the current QPA system with a weighted GPA. The weighted GPA scale to represent ranges from .7 to 5.25 Top Honors and AP courses will be more meaningful scale to represent our students. We stop issuing students discrete ranks and instead rank students by deciles. The changes have been developed with input and approval from the guidance counselors, department heads, and teachers. Parents who have attended Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meetings also endorsed these changes.

Ms. Bouvier spoke about the changes in the Guidance Office and one item she has proposed is the timeline for thinking about college and college applications to start at grades 9 and 10 instead of the fall of senior year. Niavance is one of the links that was recently added by an overall update of the Guidance Departments website.

Ms. Bouvier recommended changing the Physical Education requirement to read, "Students must pass three years of Physical Education."

Ms. Kaditz also spoke about the changes to AHS Program of Study, 2007-2008. Two additional courses under the Family and Consumer Sciences that will be added as electives: are Life Beyond High School, College, Work, Finances, and Decisions and Cooking Up Cultures. Under History and Social Sciences one addition: History, Race, Society, and Identify.

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Garbelley it was  
Voted to make changes to the Program of Study 2007-2008  
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

### **SMART GROWTH SURVEY**

Mr. Chaput, Chair of Arlington Redevelopment Board, Kevin O'Brien, Director of Planning, along with Mr. Tsoi and Bruce Fitzsimmons of the Arlington Redevelopment Board were present. Mr. Chaput emphasized the excitement between the Arlington Redevelopment Board and the School Committee working together in the planning of what the next 25 years will be like in the Town of Arlington. Mr. O'Brien noted that the Board of Selectmen asked to have the Arlington Redevelopment Board look into open space, zoning and economic development. Out of this request a smart growth survey was developed and each School Committee member was asked at the prior school committee meeting to complete. On March 1 at 7:00 p.m. the Smart Growth Survey results will be presented at the Arlington Redevelopment Boards meeting.

Mr. Tsoi led discussed the issue on rental revenue from properties that the Arlington Public School Department owns but the Arlington Redevelopment Board manages. With Arlington Public schools facing the deficit, an increase in revenue for the school department is being looked into. The Arlington Redevelopment board asked the school committee if they had any additional ideas on selection of tenants for these buildings and to help with their mission.

### **Incident at Basketball Game**

Supt. Levenson spoke briefly about the incident at the basketball game regarding the chants between a small number of fans from both Arlington and Somerville. Supt. Levenson said that this incident was reported a few days later and apologized for not reacting sooner. Arlington is working with The Human Rights Commissions here in town and will invite the committee to address this issue at our next School Committee Meeting.

### **BUDGET DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FY 08**

#### **Staffing Based on Enrollment**

Supt. Levenson wanted to speak about the staffing based on enrollment on the secondary level. As enrollments, and course offerings change and with staffing being 80% of the budget Supt. Levenson spoke to the school committee members on class size in the various levels of classroom throughout the school system. We want the students needs to be meet and continue to be cost effective at the secondary level as has already been done at the elementary level. The increase in class size would only be 1,2 or 3 students, typically. The class size would not jump from 17 to 35. The Committee members seem to agree that class size could be increased at the high school level in most classes especially honor level. When enrollment in an elective class is to small, possibly, some classes could be offered every other year. The committee members also agreed that these decisions should be made by the educational professionals principals, department heads, and teaching staff. The student reps also noted that many students have signed up for the classes at the beginning of the year and then have either dropped the class due to schedule conflict or the class had become to difficult and student class size had fluctuated.

*On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to move that the Superintendent build into the FY 08 Budget on anticipated enrollment instead of historic staffing in consultation with principals and faculty.  
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

### **Facility Charges:**

Supt. Levenson spoke about the facility charges and should everyone be considered equal? Should outside groups who use school space pay the full cost of space? Should the Hardy After School Program and Menotomy Preschool pay facilities use charges to offset the cost of using space? Should childcare for our own staff be treated differently than after school care for students? Should Arlington Catholic pay the same or less for town-based sports groups or non-town based sports groups for field use? The committee members concluded that we want to maintain these program organizations and we do not want to tip the scale to high with fees but also comprehend that the programs do need to pay otherwise the cost will have to go back to the student's fees. The committee agreed to have the policy of rental space be clear, be fair to each user group, and incorporate a lease with each group. This is continuing to be looked into.

### **Purchasing the Same Stuff at a Better Price**

Supt. Levenson discussed the financial achievement of incorporating a professionally skilled purchasing position to manage purchases as well as cost containment. The idea came when one of our intern's who was working 300 hours for free toward their certification as a Business Officer saved the department \$60,000 by suggesting a different approach on purchasing and maintaining our equipment. The intern also saved the school additional money by having the town act as general contractor for the building of the concession stand out behind the high school. The intern continued working on budgeting software and new charts of account for the business office, saving time and money, and also saving money with a better collections system in regards of the kindergarten fee collections. Based on all of the above-mentioned factors all board members were in support of this approach to build into the budget a purchasing position

*On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to move that the superintendent build in the budget to include a purchasing/cost containment position that is cost neutral in FY 08.  
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

### **Medicaid: From Out sourced to in house**

Supt. Levenson spoke briefly about the complexity of the reimbursement of Medicaid and questioned if we want to invest a greater level of manpower into collecting Medicaid reimbursement. The committee recognized if we invest someone to dig into this that we would be expending extra resources for revenue that does not get returned to the school. The conversation continued to possibly consolidated with other towns in the collection process and possibly speaking with the Finance Committee.

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Correspondence-Reviewed by Mr. Schlichtman

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Garballey shared with the board that he is participating in co-teaching a class one period a week in the Soar Group about Civic Action with Mary Cummings at the Ottoson Middle School. Mr. Garballey invited all members of the committee to meet the 15 students at the Town Hall on March 7, 2007, to meet with the administration and check out the local government. Mr. Garballey called attention to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary essay contest that is currently underway here in town.

Ms. Mazzarella conveyed to the committee that she continues to attend the Traffic Supervisors monthly meetings, and will address the issues to hire additional traffic supervisors and monitor the bidding process. Ms. Mazzarella continues to work with Rose Cazzaza, President of Traffic Supervisors union.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- *Grievance*
- *Contract Discussion*

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to go enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Grievance and Contract discussions and then to return only to adjourn.*

*Roll Call: Unanimous*

#### **ADJOURN**

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.*

*Submitted by  
Karen Fitzgerald  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee*